1. Explain the concept of connecting with others digitally and how it has evolved over time. Discuss the impact of social networks on communication, relationships, and society as a whole.

Answer:

Digital technology is a sector that has become indispensable in our daily lives both professionally and privately. Since the arrival of the Internet in the 1980s, we can communicate by email with anyone on the planet, stream videos, program our heating thermostats, book our holidays online and much more. All this anytime, and almost anywhere.

The Internet is a vast global computer network, which makes it possible to transfer information almost instantly from one place to another between individuals anywhere on the planet and browse the web, not to mention a host of other uses. All of this is made possible by a huge digital universe, consisting of servers, user terminals and communication networks, which is rapidly expanding.

To understand the environmental impact of digital technology, let's start by looking at its dramatic explosion and the challenges currently facing our rapidly evolving and now ultra-connected world.
Note: as the impact of digital technology is such a vast field of study, we're only going to look at two major trends: equipment, which has the greatest impact and digital habits.

The evolution of digital equipment and the impact of digital technology
The growth of connected devices
While it's difficult to estimate how many devices make up the Internet, as existing data is not always available due to a lack of traceability and activity or end-of-life, the wide range of manufacturers or trade secrets (among other things), there are studies producing estimates that give us some idea.
According to Cisco, one of the big names in enterprise networking, in 2018 there were:
● 3.9 billion people connected to the Internet,
● 19.4 billion devices connected to the Internet, 33% of which were Internet of Things (IoT) devices.
Cisco predicts that connected objects will grow by 10% annually to reach nearly 30 billion in 2023:
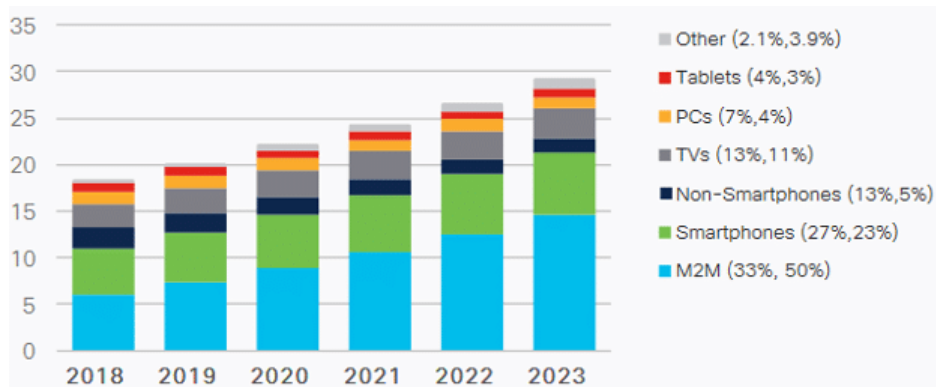
Growth in the number of connected devices in billions, © Cisco Annual Internet Report, 2018-2023

Note that this data only takes into account terminals and does not include data centers or network equipment making up the Internet.

With this growth comes an ever-increasing impact on the environment. Digital equipment consists of all the materials that have to be extracted, transported, transformed, assembled and distributed to keep us logged in.

The lion's share of this impact comes from manufacturing, which consumes the most resources and emits the most greenhouse gases: for example, in France, 80% of the digital footprint is due to device manufacturing.

The ubiquity of smartphones

Smartphones are the digital devices that we look at most on a daily basis. We can't live without them. According to the latest figures published in the Digital 2022 Report by We Are Social and Hootsuite, there are 5.48 billion cellphone users worldwide and 80% of them have smartphones.

Every year, manufacturers release new smartphone models. More efficient and more sophisticated, with more features, these devices also require more raw materials and energy, with bigger screens and parts that are no longer repairable. This encourages users to change smartphones regularly. But three quarters of the environmental impact of smartphones comes from their manufacture

Extract from the infographic "Smartphones, a complicated relationship" by ADEME

The impact these trends can have on the environment, due to their manufacture, especially the extraction of metals, is understandable. In the 1990s, cellphones contained about 30 metals, but today they contain more than 50 different metals, including precious metals such as gold and silver and rare special metals such as tantalum. The problem is that only 20 models can currently be recycled (source: ADEME).

The development of networks – 4G, and soon 5G

Rolled out in the 2010s, the 4th generation mobile network (4G) has significantly increased the bandwidth available to the end user, opening the way to a rise in the use of

multimedia and roaming. We can stream a HD video, use a mobile device as an access point and use the cloud while roaming etc.

Each of the new generations of mobile networks brings with it an increase in mobile usage, with constant, more seamless and faster access to content. The environmental impact is even greater, as increasingly powerful terminals have to be renewed, and the services offered are more byte-intensive for an equivalent terminal (source: The Shift Project).

According to Frédéric Bordage, an expert in Green IT and digital sobriety, the 4G network generates an environmental impact approximately 20 times greater than that of a wired network (ADSL) or fiber broadband. The energy consumption of mobile networks is rising sharply compared to fixed networks and, despite successive generations of networks becoming more energy efficient, the total energy consumption of digital habits has been steadily increasing for several decades (source: The Shift Project).

When it comes to 5G rollout, which is the subject of heated debate, bandwidth would be significantly increased. But this technological advance would not be carbon neutral: the High Council on Climate says in a report that 5G could lead to a rise of between 18% and 45% in the carbon impact of digital technology in 10 years and reach between 2.7 million and 6.7 million tons of CO_2 equivalent by 2030 (source French Senate). In effect, this would lead to tens of millions of devices in perfect working order becoming obsolete and being scrapped and new ones, whose manufacture and transportation are highly polluting, being acquired, changes in the way networks and data centers operate and an increase in electricity production.

The evolution of digital habits
The rise of the Internet of Things (IoT)

A very marked trend is the explosion in the number of objects connected to the Internet and embedded computing, with the arrival of new devices (portable Bluetooth speakers, fitness tracking watches and bracelets, etc.) and smart equipment in homes (household robots, televisions, surveillance systems, lighting, thermostats etc.).

Following an exponential curve, the number of digitally connected devices could double between 2020 and 2030 (source: Analytical Note, The Shift Project March 2021).
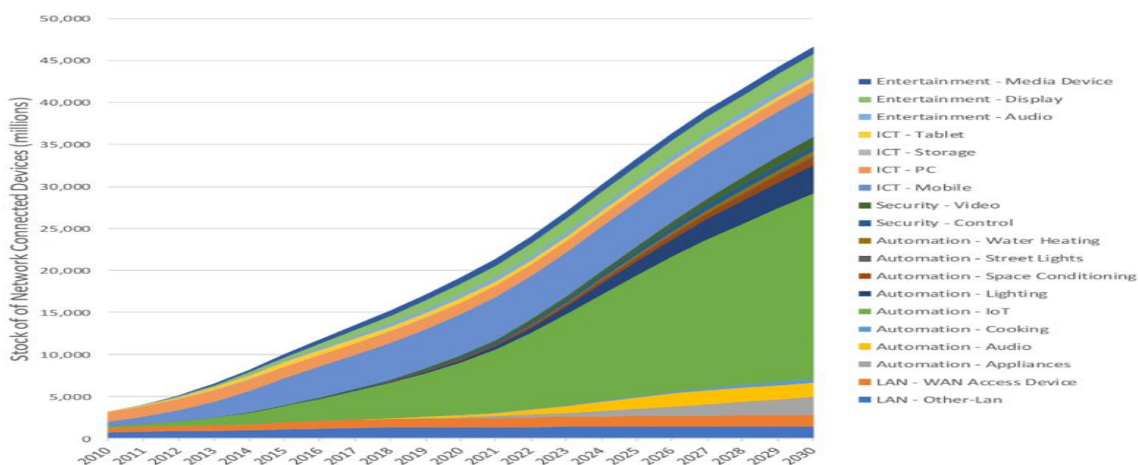
Global stock of network-connected devices (Source: Shift Project Analytical Note, based on data from IEA 4E EDNA, 2019)

This massive rise in everyday connected devices is mainly occurring in developed countries. While every global region is experiencing an increase in the amount of equipment, this is expected to rise more sharply in developed countries, which already have device overload, than in developing countries.

2012	2017	2022
2 smartphones	4 smartphones	4 smartphones
2 laptops / computers	2 laptops / computers	2 laptops / computers
1 tablet	2 tablets	2 tablets
1 DSL/Cable/Fibre/Wifi Modem	2 DSL/Cable/Fibre/Wifi Modem	3 DSL/Cable/Fibre/Wifi Modem
1 Printer / scanner	1 Printer / scanner	1 Printer / scanner
1 Game console	1 Game console	1 Game console
	1 connected television	3 connected television
	2 network attached storage	1 network attached storage
	2 eReaders	2 eReaders
	1 smart metre	1 smart metre
	2 connected stereo systems	3 connected stereo systems
	1 energy consumption display	1 energy consumption display
	1 Internet connected car	2 Internet connected car
	1 pair of connected sport shoes	3 connectes sport devices
	1 pay as you drive device	2 pay as you drive devices
		1 digital camera
		7 smart light bubles
		5 internet connected power socker
		1 weight scale
		1 eHealth device
		1 intelligent thermostat
		4 home automation sensors

Digital equipment in a four-person household in an OECD country (Source: Shift Project Analytical Note, based on GSMA data, 2015).

The data traffic explosion

Data first entered our daily lives in the 1990s with the appearance of the World Wide Web. Before the advent of social media, the online messaging apps, forums and websites that made up the Web were resource light.

In 20 years, the growth in data traffic has been explosive and the numbers are staggering. In 1992 it only represented 100GB per day. Ten years later, it has grown to the point of reaching 100GB per second! And it continues to accelerate, as evidenced by the growth of the datasphere (based on data from the Cisco Visual Networking Index Forecast):

1992: 100GB/day, i.e., less than the hard drive capacity of today's computers
1997: 2,400GB/day
2002: 8.6 million GB/day
2007: 172 million GB/day, i.e., an almost tenfold increase in 5 years
2017: 4 billion GB/day. Smartphones, social media, the cloud and video streaming have led to a data explosion
2022: 13.02 billion GB/day. If we can store 11 million HD movies on a 1 exabyte disk (one EB = one billion GB), this is equivalent to the storage required for 143,220,000 HD movies (source: IONOS).
You can see this remarkable evolution as a 3D data visualization model entitled The data era: internet traffic per day by Sophie Stenger on Sketchfab.

The video streaming boom

One of the main reasons for this data consumption? Video streaming. Since 2010, video has reigned supreme: it can be watched almost anywhere, anytime thanks to smartphones. Video streaming has transformed the datasphere and caused an explosion in the volume of data shared around the world. According to Cisco forecasts, video represented 240 exabytes (EB)/month in 2022. However, it could be dethroned in the next few years by cloud gaming or game streaming.

Streaming services such as Netflix and YouTube are responsible for this overrepresentation of audiovisual content, alongside which new players have emerged (Amazon Video, Disney, Universal and TV channels), a diversification that began in North America.

Between 2013 and 2019, the most popular streaming services in North America, ranked, in relation to each other, by their share of internet traffic:
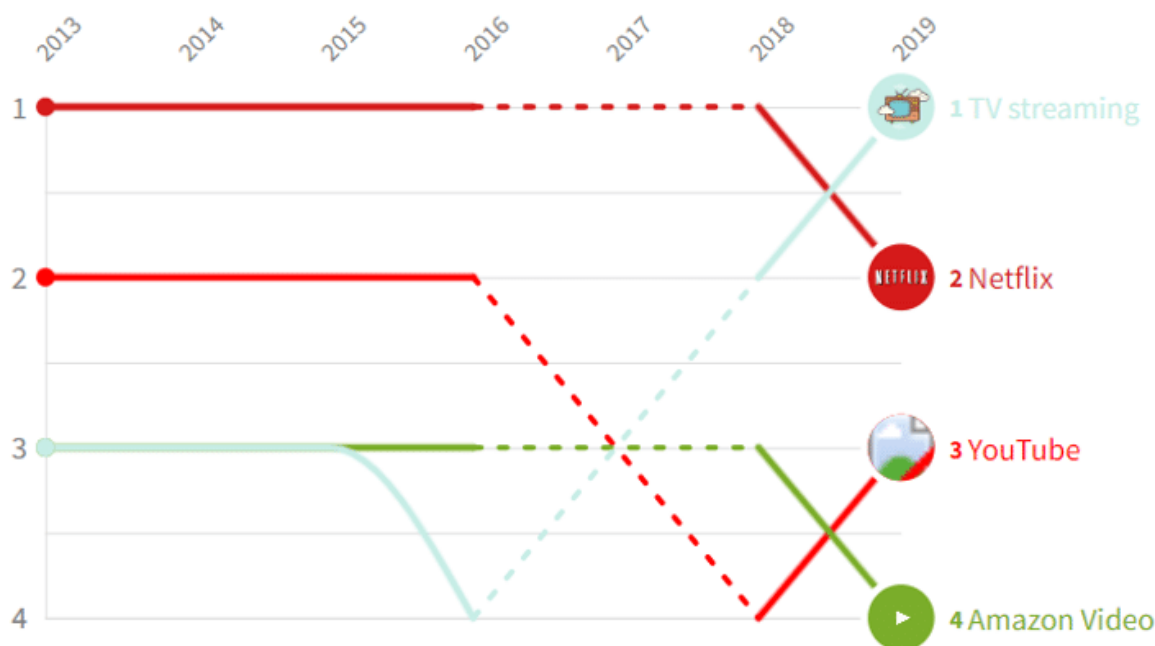
Source: Sandvine Global Internet Phenomena Report •
Un classement relatif a été établi car les méthodes d'évaluation de la part de trafic internet ont évolué entre 2013 et 2019, elles ne sont donc pas comparables en valeur absolue. En l'absence de rapport, les données 2017 sont indisponibles.

In terms of impact, the global energy consumption of video streaming emits 300 million tons of CO_2 worldwide each year, equivalent to the digital pollution of a country like Spain.

Reducing our impact by opting for digital sobriety

Digital energy consumption increased by about 9% per year from 2015 to 2020 (the Shift Project), a trend that continues to grow with the evolution of our digital habits.

Against this backdrop, it's easy to understand that the concept of digital sobriety, which has emerged in recent years, is vital to reduce the environmental impact of digital

technology. The fundamental principle: use it less and change your habits to avoid creating and consuming data unnecessarily.

As a provider of Digital Asset Management (DAM) solutions, Wedia offers marketing and creative teams that produce and distribute digital content a tool to make them more efficient and make their marketing more sustainable.

Social media has become an integral part of our lives, with billions of people using it to connect with friends and family, share experiences, and even find love. While it has undoubtedly transformed the way we communicate and interact, social media also has a significant impact on our relationships. In this article, we'll explore the positive and negative effects of social media on modern relationships, examine how it has influenced our love lives, and discuss strategies for managing social media in relationships.

The Positive Impact of Social Media on Modern Relationships

Let's start with the good news: social media has many positive effects on modern relationships. In a world where people are increasingly disconnected, social media has made it easier to stay connected with loved ones, regardless of distance. With the click of a button, we can see what our friends and family are up to, celebrate their achievements, and offer support when they need it most.

In addition to increased communication and connection, social media has also given us the opportunity to share experiences and interests with others. From posting photos of a romantic getaway to sharing a favorite song, social media enables us to express ourselves in ways that were once impossible. This can be particularly beneficial for couples who may have different interests or hobbies. By sharing their passions with one another on social media, they can learn more about each other and deepen their bond.

Social media has provided us with improved access to resources and support. With a wealth of information available at our fingertips, we can seek out advice, learn new skills, and connect with others who share our struggles. Whether it's finding a support group for couples going through infertility or getting advice on how to spice up your sex life, social media can be a valuable tool for finding the help we need.

The Negative Impact of Social Media on Modern Relationships

While social media has many benefits, it also has a darker side. One of the biggest negative impacts of social media on modern relationships is that it can distract from face-to-face communication. With so many notifications and messages competing for our attention, it can be easy to lose sight of the people sitting right in front of us. This can lead to feelings of disconnection and resentment, particularly if one partner feels that their needs are not being met.

Another way that social media can negatively impact relationships is by promoting unrealistic expectations. From the perfect Instagram couple to the lovey-dovey Facebook posts, social media can make it seem like everyone else has a better relationship than you do. This can lead to feelings of jealousy, insecurity, and even depression. In some cases, it can even drive a wedge between partners, as one partner may feel like they can never live up to the idealized version of love that they see online.

Social media can also facilitate jealousy and insecurity. From liking an ex's photo to flirting with someone on Twitter, social media can be a breeding ground for mistrust and suspicion. This can be particularly damaging in romantic relationships, where trust is essential for building a strong foundation.

Examples of How Social Media has Impacted Modern Relationships

To better understand how social media has impacted modern relationships, let's take a look at a few examples.

Dating apps and online matchmaking have revolutionized the way we find love. With apps like Tinder and Bumble, it's now easier than ever to connect with potential partners, regardless of where you live or what you're looking for. While these apps have certainly made it easier to find love, they have also led to a culture of "swiping" where people are judged solely on their looks or a brief profile. This can lead to unrealistic expectations and a lack of connection, which can be damaging in the long run.

Influencer culture is another way that social media has impacted modern relationships. With influencers posting picture-perfect photos of their seemingly perfect relationships, it's easy to feel like your own love life is lacking. However, it's important to remember that social media is not real life, and that the relationships we see online are often carefully curated to present a certain image. By focusing on our own relationships and what makes them special, we can avoid the trap of comparison and build a stronger, more authentic connection with our partner.

Cyberbullying is another way that social media can impact modern relationships. Whether it's a nasty comment on a photo or a full-blown online harassment campaign, cyberbullying can be incredibly damaging to both individuals and relationships. It's important to remember that cyberbullying is never okay, and that if you or your partner are experiencing it, there are resources available to help.

## Strategies for Managing Social Media in Relationships

Given the potential pitfalls of social media, it's important to have strategies in place for managing it in relationships. Here are a few tips to get you started:

Set boundaries and expectations. Talk to your partner about what you're comfortable with in terms of social media use. This could include things like not posting photos of each other without permission, or agreeing to limit phone use during meals or other quality time together.

Prioritize face-to-face communication. While social media can be a great way to stay connected, it's important not to let it overshadow in-person interactions. Make time for date nights, long conversations, and other activities that allow you to connect on a deeper level.

Balance online and offline interactions. Social media can be a valuable tool for connecting with others and finding resources, but it's important to balance this with other forms of communication. Make sure to take breaks from social media and spend time doing other activities that bring you joy.

Social Media and the Impact on Different Kinds of Relationships
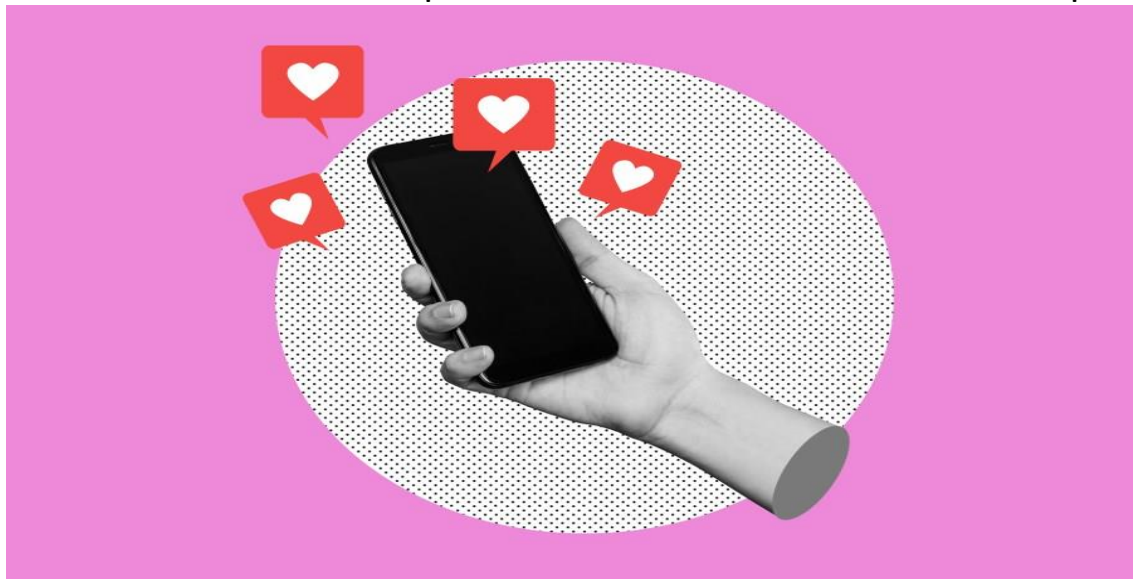
The impact of social media isn't limited to romantic relationships. In fact, social media can have a significant impact on other types of relationships as well, such as friendships and family connections.

Friendships

Social media has revolutionized the way we connect with friends. It's now easier than ever to stay in touch with friends from high school or college, even if they live across the country or world. However, social media can also create new challenges for friendships. For example, it's easy to misinterpret messages or tone online, which can lead to

misunderstandings or hurt feelings. Additionally, social media can facilitate social comparison and feelings of inadequacy, as we see our friends' highlight reels online.

Family Connections

Social media has also changed the way we interact with our families. It's now possible to stay connected with extended family members who we might not have seen or talked to in years. However, social media can also create new tensions and conflicts within families. For example, political discussions or differences of opinion can easily spill over into social media, creating rifts between family members. Additionally, social media can exacerbate existing family conflicts or lead to misunderstandings.

It's important to recognize that social media can impact all types of relationships, not just romantic ones. By understanding the unique challenges and opportunities that social media presents in each type of relationship, we can build stronger, more resilient connections with the people we care about.

Tips

Here are some practical tips for managing social media use in relationships:

- ❖ **Set clear boundaries:** It's important to have open and honest conversations with your partner about your social media use and how it affects your relationship. Together, you can set clear boundaries around when and how you use social media. For example, you might agree to put your phones away during meals or to avoid scrolling through social media before bed.
- ❖ Be mindful of how you portray your relationship online: **It's important to consider how your social media posts might impact your partner and your relationship. Avoid oversharing personal details or airing your grievances online, as this can be hurtful to your partner and may damage your relationship.**
- ❖ **Address conflicts offline:** If you have a disagreement or conflict with your partner online, it's important to address it offline as soon as possible. Misunderstandings and hurt feelings can quickly spiral out of control online, so it's best to have a face-to-face conversation to resolve the issue.
- ❖ **Practice empathy and understanding:** It's important to recognize that social media can be a source of insecurity, jealousy, and comparison in relationships. If your partner is struggling with social media use, try to practice empathy and understanding. Ask them how you can support them and work together to find solutions.
- ❖ **Take breaks from social media:** It can be helpful to take regular breaks from social media to recharge and reconnect with your partner. You might agree to take a social media detox together or to limit your social media use to certain times of day.

By implementing these practical tips, you can build a healthier, more positive relationship with social media and your partner. Remember, social media can be a valuable tool for connecting with others, but it's important to use it mindfully and in a way that supports your relationship.

2. Differentiate between various types of social media platforms, such as social networking sites, microblogging platforms, photo-sharing apps, and professional networking sites.
Answer:
Social media networking goes far beyond Instagram and Twitter. In this article, learn about the seven different types of social networking and how you can leverage each for your business.

i.   Traditional social networking sites

Most of us are familiar with social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok. These platforms help us connect with friends, family, and brands. They encourage knowledge-sharing and are all about personal, human-to-human interaction.
A social networking site is a Jill of all trades. Users can share thoughts, curate content, upload photos and videos, form groups based on interests, and participate in lively discussions. They're built around the user and everything that's important to them and their social circles. Also, they help us to measure the social media ROI which helps us in planning an effective marketing strategy.
So how can this type of traditional social networking site help your business?
Reach a target audience through ads
These platforms cultivate large, diverse communities. Advertisers can rent permission to interact with people based on specific targeting metrics. For instance, an advertiser who wants to reach a predominantly young crowd could advertise on an app like Snapchat while those who want to reach a professional user may find LinkedIn more appropriate.
Because these platforms are incredibly data-rich, you can reach a lot of the right people without blowing your entire ad budget.
Network
Engage with followers, find like-minded customers or potential business partners through hashtags and groups, and build connections.
Research
Social networking platforms are a great place for digging up customer research and using social listening tools to track conversations around specific terms. This can help you understand (and serve) your audience better.

ii.   Social review sites

What's one of the first things you do when planning a trip or buying a new product? If you're anything like us, you'll head straight to the reviews.
Review sites like Yelp and TripAdvisor display reviews from community members for all sorts of locations and experiences. This eliminates a lot of the guesswork that goes into booking a restaurant or hotel. Not sure it's the right thing for you? Check out the reviews and you'll know.
Businesses can really benefit from studying their reviews, the good and the bad. It helps them:
Understand the customer's perspective
Reviews tell you about the customer experience from their own point of view. Use this to identify what's working and discover areas with room for improvement.

iii.   Image and video sharing sites

Visual content like images, infographics, and illustrations capture our hearts, eyes and imaginations. Social media platforms like Instagram, Imgur, and Snapchat are designed to amplify the power of image sharing. (Or these days, video sharing.)
Users create, curate, and share unique content that sparks conversation and speaks for itself. A picture or video can be worth a thousand words to your business. Use these sites to:

Encourage user-generated content
Content sharing sites are a gift for photogenic businesses. You can run campaigns encouraging users to snap and share a pic or video with your product and a unique hashtag.

Create inspiration
By creating, curating, and sharing your own content, you can inspire and engage users, bonding over a shared interest.

iv.   Video hosting sites

YouTube revolutionized the way we watch, create, and think about video. It transformed the medium into something accessible. Recent improvements in tech and connectivity helped video go the rest of the way.

Video hosting platforms like YouTube and Vimeo help creators put together content and share it to a platform optimized for streaming. This accessibility makes video a super important medium.

Use video hosting sites to:

Share phenomenal content
Yes. This point is a bit obvious, but creators can use YouTube to build communities and get their content out there.

Engage
YouTube's comment section offers plenty of opportunities to get to know the people watching your content.

v.   Community blogs

Sometimes an image or post isn't complex enough for the message you've got to share, but not everyone on the internet wants to run a blog from a self-hosted website. That's a lot of work.

Shared blogging platforms like Medium and Tumblr give people a space to express their thoughts and help connect them with readers.

These community blog sites provide an audience while allowing plenty of room for customization and self expression. Use them to:

Develop your voice
Starting a blog can be daunting. Use platforms like Medium and Tumblr to find your voice, get some readers, and get clear about your vision.

Syndicate content
If you do have a blog, you can use community blogging platforms to share, re-purpose, and re-post older content and expose it to a new audience.

vi.   Discussion sites

While most of us have seen many a heated discussion happen on Facebook, discussion sites like Reddit and Quora are specifically designed to spark a conversation.

Anyone is free to ask a question or make a statement, and this attracts people with shared interests and curiosities. However, unlike Facebook and Instagram, users tend to give out less identifiable information. Anonymity is powerful when it comes to people opening up and getting real.

So how can these platforms help your business?

Research

Reddit is made up of different sub-communities. With a bit of research, you can find and engage people in your field, discover what they're asking, and use this as a starting point for your content marketing strategy.

Answer questions

Quora users ask all sorts of questions. Answering them can help establish you as a thought leader and drive more traffic to your site.

vii.   Sharing economy networks

Sites like Airbnb and Rover aren't just a cool place to find cheap holiday rentals or a pet sitter. Sharing economy networks bring people who've got something they want to share together with the people who need it.

These communities provide opportunities that won't exist otherwise by pooling resources on a large scale that wouldn't be possible without tech.

3. Explain the concept of social media marketing and discuss strategies for businesses to effectively promote their products or services.

   Answer:

Social media marketing involves using platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, and TikTok to effectively reach a wider audience and communicate with customers. Social media marketing is necessary for any small business marketing strategy and requires a robust plan. Your customers expect engaging content and the ability to communicate with you through direct messaging and comments.

Effective social media marketing for small businesses gives you the unique opportunity to humanize your brand and drive traffic back to your website. With social media advertising, you can also generate leads and sales while increasing brand awareness. Many small businesses even use social media for customer service, allowing customers to message them directly to have issues resolved and questions answered.

How to market your business on social media

Social media is integral to any marketing strategy, but it may seem daunting for small business owners who don't know how to use different platforms. Luckily, social media marketing is fairly easy to learn and doesn't require too much time or money. Any budget can support a robust social media marketing strategy as long as you get to know your customers and can create engaging content regularly. Here's how to promote your business on social media.

1. Identify your audience

Many businesses make the mistake of trying to reach everyone. But understanding and organizing your audience can help you send the right message to the right people and more effectively meet your marketing goals.

This begins with identifying your target audience. The details about who these people are should be based on the audience data you already have, as well as your market research.

To find your target audience:

- Compile data. In order to reach your target market, you need to know what they're like. It's important to know things like your audience members' ages, locations, and engagement patterns to market effectively to them. While it may seem daunting to gather this information, customer relationship management software stores and sorts this data and makes it easy to put into action.

- Use social media analytics. Many platforms, like Facebook and Twitter, have built-in analytics that can tell you about your followers, including when they post, where they post, and other interests. Plus, these tools are free to use with business accounts.

- Check the competition. Understanding your competition will give you insights about how to talk to your audience. You can look at what your competitors are doing wrong to fill any gaps in your current strategy.

Once you've identified your target audience, it's important to keep up to date with their interests and to implement a social listening strategy to understand their wants and needs.

2. Define your goals and KPIs

To excel in social media marketing, it's important to create goals that guide your efforts. The SMART goal strategy provides a helpful framework to create foundational goals and meet your overall objectives.

SMART stands for:

- Specific: In order to measure and meet goals, it's important to be clear about precisely what you hope to achieve. This is especially important for getting your team onboard as you work collectively towards the goal. A specific social media goal, for example, might be to increase your Twitter followers by 20% this quarter.

- Measurable: You need to know definitively whether you've reached your goal or not. Measurement makes that possible. By using metrics to track your progress, you can also pivot your goals if need be. For instance, if you find that likes and follows don't lead to website traffic, you can change the metric to something that will help you achieve your goal.

- Achievable: All goals should be within reach of your business. If you set goals that are unreasonable, you risk discouraging your employees and creating friction in your business plan. As you set specific, measurable goals, make sure to adjust if it seems like you aren't reaching them.

- Relevant: Your social media marketing goals should ladder up to your larger business objectives. For example, if it's your objective to build brand awareness, you could set a goal to get 100 social media followers to click through a post to a landing page that describes your offerings.

- Timely: To keep yourself accountable, goals should have a time limit. Instead of creating a goal for some undefined time in the near future, make sure to set a specific cadence to check in and ensure you're staying on track.

Though social media marketing has many moving parts, SMART goals give you a starting point, as well as a means to check in and make changes as needed.

3. Allocate your resources wisely

For small businesses strapped for money and time, sometimes social media tasks get arbitrarily offloaded onto whoever is available. But social media management requires unique skills, like:

- Strategic thinking

- Organizational skills

- Branding expertise

If you have the means, hiring an expert to handle social media can pay off. But if you don't have the budget for an on-staff social media manager, you can still invest in advertisements on social platforms, which can boost brand awareness and expand reach.

4. Use multiple platforms

Consider the multiple social media platforms your customers use daily. Ultimately, your strategy should allow you to reach as many people through social media as possible, and you can't do that by focusing on only one platform.

Depending on your audience, many of them may use Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok throughout the day, giving you three opportunities to get your content in front of them. Social media apps to know include Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, LinkedIn, and Twitter. However, investing in a strategy for all of these platforms isn't necessary. Instead, consider the apps your customers are most likely to use.

5. Post relevant content regularly

Success on social media is a matter of posting compelling, engaging content consistently. Not only will this help make your business look dependable, but it also shows that you have timely knowledge to share and that you care to be in conversation with your audience.

Social media platforms change their algorithms over time, but the rule of posting regularly holds true: This practice helps your content show up in newsfeeds. By focusing on consistent, relevant content, you show the algorithms that your posts are worthy of showing up in various newsfeeds and ultimately, will attract followers to your page.

6. Interact with followers

Social media users enjoy interacting with brands, and as a result brands experience benefits like:

- Social proof of your business

- Expanded market reach

- Boosted brand awareness

- Cost-efficiency

The opportunity for a high return on investment (ROI) is huge—83% of customers value customer experience, and that includes social media interactions in which businesses make their audience feel seen, heard, and understood. Social media allows you to monitor conversations in real-time and answer questions or concerns from your audience promptly.

This can take many forms, like:

- Asking questions relevant to your offerings

- Creating a Facebook Group for your audience

- Using GIFs, videos, and emojis to spice up messages

- Utilizing platform tools, like Instagram Live to start discussions

A good strategy is to allow 1 hour a day to communicate with your audience on social media. However, if there are pressing concerns, you should always take the time to respond promptly.

7. Always maintain professionalism

It's important to remember that as you post on social media, you are always representing your business. Posts are taken out of context all too often, which can lead to conflict and upset followers. If your social media responsibilities are allocated to other staff members, consider creating a social media policy to guide their posts and conversations.

Typically, a standard social media policy will include:

- Clear expectations about what to post

- Instructions on how to respond to negative posts

- Platform laws and rules to follow

- Brand considerations

- Security protocols

By investing in a social media policy, your business can be ready for any scenario. It's important to remember that at the core of social media, you are implementing your customer service philosophy.

8. Reflect your brand identity

Brand identity is what helps people connect to your business and sets you apart from your competitors. This means that all marketing, including print, digital, and social media, should be consistent.

Brand consistency can be challenging for businesses, especially when you're just getting started. But it's important across channels, and that certainly includes social media. As you are posting, you'll want to think about:

- How you talk to your customers, otherwise known as a brand voice

- Posting similar visuals across the various platforms

- Focusing on your unique selling point.

Not only will a consistent brand identity make it easier to know what to post, but it can also help increase brand loyalty.

9. Prioritize quality over quantity

Instead of posting multiple times a day on as many platforms as possible, you should focus on delivering consistent, quality posts. In fact, some social media sites may penalize your account and mark you as spam for too many low-quality posts. Additionally, posting could become overwhelming and problematic whoever handles your social media, whether that's you or a teammate, and that could wind up hurting your strategy rather than helping.

To mitigate these risks, consider implementing a social media calendar. These calendars can help you plan posts in advance while ensuring you stay organized. Categories including when to post, post caption, post visual, and which platforms to post on can help marketers keep track of the various moving parts of social media.

Another way to prioritize quality posts is to ask yourself the following questions:

Does this content help my followers?

Is this original?

Is this actionable, inspiring, or entertaining?

Does the content have cited sources, if needed?

All of these questions can help you create quality content that will engage and attract followers. Learning about the top social media content to create for each platform is key to helping you reach more people online.

10. Measure your results

There are many factors that affect social media marketing, and that's why it's important to analyze and measure results. Analytics come in handy because they can help:

Optimize campaigns

Create new goals

Assess tracking metrics

Before you start tracking, though, you should identify which metrics are most important to your marketing goals. The most common metrics are:

- Reach

- Engagement

- Impressions

- Mentions

- Post clicks

- Video views

11. Develop a unique strategy

You might have the impulse to post on as many platforms as possible, but this could actually derail your social media marketing strategy. For example, if you're trying to target people who are over 50 years of age, you'll find that most of your audience is on Facebook, so it's not as worthwhile to prioritize Instagram.

When creating a social media marketing strategy, focus on:

- Where your audience is

- Where your competitors post

- What your metrics tell you

Social media platforms to use for business

✓ Facebook
✓ Instagram
✓ YouTube
✓ Twitter
✓ LinkedIn
✓ Pinterest

Additionally, you'll want to think about how to best use each platform, based on what it was created for and the content that does best there:

Facebook offers quality video streaming, like live video, as well as a high-functioning messaging platform that allows brands to interact with their followers one-on-one.

- Instagram supports more visually compelling posts and creative short videos.

- YouTube is best for longer informational or entertaining video content.

- Twitter allows for real-time conversations, news updates, and alerts.

- LinkedIn works well for long-form written content, like blog posts.

- Pinterest lets users discover content and relies on visuals to catch their attention.

Depending on your social media strategy, you may realize that you don't have to use YouTube if your users are primarily on Facebook. Or if you find that you can say more with pictures than you can with words, Instagram might be more useful. Make sure to research the best strategy for each platform you use to get the most out of your marketing efforts. While there are many tips to grow your small business, social media can help you discover and retain new customers.

12. Partner with influencers and industry leaders

Partnering with influencers can help you take your social media marketing to the next level by leveraging their talents to help you grow your business. Influencers have their own personal branding and followers that trust their expertise. Working with influencers in your industry can help you build brand awareness and increase sales. Since influencers are

real people, they're more easily trusted by customers, allowing you to use that to your advantage.

13. Livestream occasionally

Live streaming can help boost your organic reach on social media. Because live streaming taps into your followers' fear of missing out (FOMO), you can reach more people at a time. Live streaming also allows you to be more personal with your audience and give them insight into your business and its products to build trust.

14. Post at the best times

Creating quality content can ensure you reach more people and engage your audience. However, if your customers aren't active on social media when you post, they likely won't ever see your content. You can find the times when your audience is online by looking at your social media analytics. Many social media management tools also give you insight into the best times to post based on when your followers are typically online. You can also experiment by posting at different times of day to determine how it affects engagement and reach.

Benefits of marketing on social media

Every small business should invest in social media marketing to promote their business and boost online visibility. A few benefits of social media marketing include:

- Cost-effective. Social media marketing and advertising is cost-effective. If you want to post content organically, it may only cost you your time. However, advertising your business on social media is one of the most cost-effective advertising solutions available for small businesses. You can set a budget for as low as $1.00/day on Facebook.

- More exposure. Marketing your business on social media allows you to reach more people. Engaging content will likely be shared, helping you increase your online visibility.

- Boost brand awareness. Social media is a great tool for increasing brand awareness by boosting online visibility. However, if you want to take advantage of social media to raise brand awareness, consider creating advertisements that expand your reach.

- Drive traffic to business websites. Your social media marketing should drive traffic back to your website, where customers can complete actions like filling out forms or making purchases.

- Support customers quickly. Social media allows you to handle online customer service requests quickly and easily. When someone messages you directly on social media, you can answer their questions in real-time, giving them a fast response that improves their experience with your business.

- Increased credibility. Posting engaging and educational content can increase your credibility, helping new customers learn that you're a thought leader they can trust.

4. Discuss strategies for mitigating risks and maximizing benefits when engaging with social media platforms.
   Answer:

   A social media risk management plan provides your company with a roadmap for both avoiding and swiftly addressing social media security risks and PR complications. It helps ensure that an organization is able to maintain control over its social media communications with consumers.
   In particular, a social media risk management plan designates and establishes:

   - Which team members are responsible for social media risk management
   - Who has access to accounts
   - Who publishes posts and/or message consumers
   - What posts require review from your brand's legal team
   - What steps should be taken should a social media security risk or PR issues arise
   - How to properly add new users to a social media accounts and deactivate users when they leave the company
   - What the are rules when representing the brand online (both on official accounts and employee accounts)
   - How often and to what extent the plan should be reviewed

   The goal of a social media risk management plan is twofold: To prevent unauthorized, inaccurate, and inappropriate communication from a brand via its social media channels, and to have a social media risk management workflow in place to address these issues should any of them occur.

What social media risks should brands be concerned with?

There are a few overarching ways things can go awry on social media in terms of brand communication.

1. Permissions and user authorization issues

User authorization refers to what actions each particular behind-the-scenes user is able to perform on a platform. Typically, there are different permission levels within these platforms that dictate whether individuals have full or partial access to various aspects of the social media platform.

It's important to make sure each individual with account access has the right authorization level. Letting everyone have admin privileges could enable someone to accidentally (or maliciously) edit the brand page or publish an unauthorized communication in the form of a post or message.

2. Phishing and scams

Social media phishing occurs when a malicious third-party attempts to impersonate a brand and communicate with customers to get them to reveal sensitive personal information. On social media, some individuals will create fake brand accounts and publish posts designed to look like promotional offers using the same language used by the actual organization.

By clicking on the link, the consumer may enable the impersonator to access sensitive information such as company passwords and credit card numbers. Alternatively, some users will create fake accounts and respond to messages directed at the real brand, asking users to send personal information like in this example from a fake Verizon account.

Even if *your* brand accounts are secure, you should practice social media monitoring to quickly identify and report these scammers or risk their activities giving your brand a bad reputation.

3. Breaches in security, particularly those caused by weak passwords

Did you know that an eight-character password can be cracked in under eight hours? Meanwhile, according to LMG Security, it takes eight *years* to crack a 10-character password, and 77,000 years to crack a twelve-character password.

When choosing passwords for social media accounts, it can be tempting to opt for efficiency over security, choosing short, easy-to-remember passwords that are easy to share between platforms. Unfortunately, this practice makes your brand vulnerable to hackers, and this can have serious consequences; you're placing your brand's information in harm's way. You're also putting the sensitive customer information shared in private messages at risk, too. Adding even a few extra characters can mean a lot more security, and secure password management software can help you gain back any efficiency lost by making passwords more complicated.

4. Legal and compliance risks

Brands must follow advertising regulations, industry standards, social media platform guidelines, contractual agreements with their partners, and internal rules. If your social media content is not being reviewed by the right people before it is posted, it ultimately may get into legal trouble or be removed from the platform entirely, costing you revenue, damaging your brand's reputation, fueling a potential PR fiasco.

5. Tarnished brand reputation

The internet can be a complicated place. And as we've seen time and time again, public sentiment can turn on a dime when something goes wrong. We mentioned that fake accounts are associated with phishing and scams, but they also pose a risk to your brand reputation.

Through fake accounts, users can impersonate brands and post content that's malicious or uncharacteristic of the brand's beliefs. For example, a user created the following fake account for Pepsi and posted a message *"Coke is better"* that received more than 3,000 likes and 700 retweets.

Should any of the above occur, your brand reputation could suffer — sometimes significantly — especially if issues are not handled quickly and professionally. That's why it's important for brands to utilize social media monitoring to identify impersonators before false messages go viral.

How to develop and implement a 6-step social media risk management plan
There's no one-size-fits-all social media risk management plan that will work for every organization, but following these six best practices when building out your brand's plan will help point you in the right direction
1. Develop a social media risk management policy committee
Unfortunately, a social media risk management plan won't just materialize out of thin air — you need a team to make it. Because social media is a huge part of how brands operate, you will want to involve stakeholders from multiple departments, including but not limited to marketing, customer service, HR, PR, legal, and IT.
The full committee will be responsible for developing a well-rounded strategy, but oversight and implementation should be relegated to a smaller group of individuals.
Once you have the policy committee in place…
2. Perform an audit of all social media accounts
This audit will help you know exactly what social media risks your brand is currently facing. Make note of holes in your current strategy and plan to address them as soon as possible. Throughout this process, you should also take the time to identify all users with past or present access credentials. Ideally, you will also have user credential data. Often, credentials are siloed on an employee's computer in an Excel document, which is all the more reason you need a governance tool and security strategy in place. Remember to also include any relevant 3rd party agencies and each agency user that has access to your social accounts. This is key to the assessment: make sure every credentialed user is accounted for.
It can be a difficult process to hunt down all this information in various locations throughout your organization, but it's a necessary step in establishing a complete security policy.
3. Formalize objectives, create workflows, and establish responsible positions
The objectives of your social media risk management plan should clearly outline exactly how your organization will proactively mitigate risks associated with social media, including content publishing breaches, user access, and disparate credentialing documents living in various areas that pose a security risk.
Your committee should document how your brand will proactively avoid risks and establish workflows when issues do occur. You will want to formally designate what roles in your corporation handle each step in these processes, and what is expected of the employees in this role. It is essential that those who handle these responsibilities understand the goal and value of your risk management plan, so ensure language used in documenting your plan and conveying responsibilities is clear and concise.
4. Develop internal rules which will allow users access to specific accounts
Moving forward, you'll need to decide who has access to which accounts and what access level is appropriate for each individual. Depending on what social media platforms you are using, you may be able to limit permissions. If there are technological limitations, may have to set additional organizational rules.
For example, granting a marketing employee access to publish posts may also enable them to respond to private messages, even if you only want your customer service team to handle

these interactions. Make the guidelines clear so that each person knows exactly what they are and are not allowed to post and engage on the brand's behalf.

5. Educate your employees on their roles and responsibilities

Beyond platform access and permission levels, make sure each employee is educated on the broader social media risk management policy so they understand the big picture and reasoning behind these precautions. Doing this will ensure nobody takes a shortcut when it's time to create a new password or share access through an unsecured method.

It's important that everyone in your organization knows they have a responsibility and role to play in keeping the brand safe on social media.

At this stage, your social media risk management framework should be in place, but note that it will require regular maintenance.

6. Outline how often you'll formally audit your organization's social media accounts and users

You should audit your social media channels on a quarterly or bi-annual basis, depending on the size of your company, particularly if you have frequent agency engagement with your social channels. You'll also want to perform an additional audit when significant changes occur in your organization, such as a rebrand or the offboarding of a significant player on your team, like your social media manager.

It's also a good idea to do a social media risk assessment at least once a year. This involves reviewing your plan and identifying any new vulnerabilities so they can be promptly addressed.

Remember that you'll have to modify your plan over time as your organization expands to new platforms and existing platforms change.